

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

DA	
DDI	
DDP	
DDO	
DDF	
DDG	
DDH	
DDI	
DDJ	
DDK	
DDL	
DDM	
DDN	
DDO	
DDP	
DDQ	
DDR	
DDT	
DDU	
DDV	
DDW	
DDX	
DDY	
DDZ	

file -
narcotics

BRAZIL

(C) Four Soldiers Killed
During Interrogation Over Narcotics

7 February 1972

3

DIRM 1C

FOIA(b)(3) - 10 USC 424 - DIA, NRO and NSA

January, 1972

Brasília, 7 Feb 72

B

2

An Army colonel with access to information of this nature; he is in intelligence work and has reported reliably for 19 years.

50X1 HUMINT

(C) The Army Minister's office made a public announcement on 6 February to the effect that soldiers of an Army unit at Barra Mansa, State of Rio de Janeiro, had died as a result of an investigation connected with the discovery of narcotics in the possession of members of the unit. This IR gives details concerning the incident. Available information indicates that the soldiers were the victims of brutality during interrogation by officers and NCOs.

1. (U) A laconic press release from the Public Relations Section of the Army Minister's staff, stated the following on 6 February 1972:

"The Army Public Relations Center announces the discovery of a group of soldiers belonging to a military organization located at Barra Mansa, State of Rio de Janeiro, who were connected with the habit and traffic of narcotics. According to information developed up to now, it appears that members of that military organization who were initially charged with the investigation to determine the ramifications of the network of narcotics traffic, acted in a contemptible and warped manner,

USCINCSO
USARSO

GROUP 3
DOWNGRADED AT 12 YEAR IN-
TERVALS; NOT AUTOMATICALLY
DECLASSIFIED

None

AMB & DCM
USIS
✓POL
POL (R)
AARMA (Rio)
COMUSMILGP

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

72-0072

~~SECRET~~~~SECRET~~2 3
50X1 HUMINT

thus causing the death of soldiers. Such actions are totally contrary to the law and to pertinent Army directives, and are looked upon with utter repudiation by the Service and with the just repugnance of its members. The maximum firmness has been directed in the investigation of the facts, because the Army can never acquiesce to matters of this nature which are the consequence of individual perversions."

2. (G) The first indication that something was wrong at the 1st Armored Infantry Battalion at Barra Mansa, came to my attention about ten days ago. At that time, LTC João CASSIO Martins de Souza Santos, who had been assigned to command the unit, effective 15 March 1972, told me that he was leaving Brasília hurriedly to assume command. He said that his predecessor, Colonel ARIOSWALDO Tavares Gomes da Silva, had been summarily relieved due to a serious problem, and that he (CASSIO) would have to leave his wife and family in Brasília until some unknown future date. Discreet inquiries at the time indicated that ARIOSWALDO had been sacked because of involvement in Barra Mansa politics. In December, ARIOSWALDO had written to a friend in Brasília to say that he had practically turned over his unit to his Executive Officer, because he intended to dedicate his last three months to "politics and public relations." Thus, it appeared reasonable that he might have become over-involved politically and thus had earned the wrath of the Army Minister.

3. (G) Now, however, the truth seems to involve a much more ugly scenario than mere dabbling in politics. According to source, officers of the 1st Battalion became enraged when soldiers in the unit were discovered under the influence of narcotics. Using harsh interrogation methods, the unit investigators apparently obtained confessions from several users of narcotics. The evidence pointed to four soldiers who were identified as "pushers" of the "grass" that was widely used in the unit. The four soldiers were "squeezed" in an effort to obtain the identification of their civilian sources of supply. In the "squeezing" process, the young men refused to talk and source says that they were tortured with utter brutality until they died. The follow-up and still active investigation has identified a regular Army captain and a reserve lieutenant, as well as several sergeants, as directly involved in the murder of the conscripts.

(S) COMMENT: ARIOSWALDO and those directly involved are through as far as their careers are concerned, even though some of them may survive the investigation sufficiently to remain on active duty. It is of extraordinary significance that the Army has made as much information public as it has in this case, particularly since the press release makes it quite clear that reprehensible violence was involved. The Army has policed itself with dispatch in cases of excesses where real or suspected subversion was involved, however, it has always done so in a manner designed not to damage the public image of the Institution nor to dissuade those who were called upon to face the high risk task of confronting deadly terrorists. The publicity given to this case and likely to follow in the weeks ahead, constitutes a stern warning to security personnel with respect to abuses of authority in the form of brutality. In effect, the Barra Mansa tragedy and its public disclosure, has served to reiterate the Government's privately stated posture against torture. Yet another

~~SECRET~~~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~~~SECRET~~3 3
50X1 HUMINT

significant element in this case is its reflection of the dread with which the military establishment looks upon the problem of narcotics and dangerous drugs in Brazilian society. While the Barra Mansa incident represents an extreme reaction, it is perhaps indicative of the fact that, at this state of the problem, at any rate, military men are likely to face the issue on the basis of punishment, rather than treatment.

~~SECRET~~~~SECRET~~